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UNCLAS LAGOS 002163

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/DMALAC AND OES/HLEE

USDA FOR FAS/OA/BSIMMONS AND APHIS/BRS/JTURNER

STATE PASS TO USAID FOR JLEWIS

STATE PASS TO FDA FOR RLAKE

EPA FOR JANDERSEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [SENV](#) [TBIO](#) [TSPL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: STATUS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY REGULATIONS

REF: STATE 263456

1. (U) Nigeria has no specific law governing the approval, production, importation, and labeling of products of agricultural biotechnology. Nigeria's Draft Biosafety Guidelines state proposed procedures to follow to import or test GMO in the country.

2. (U) In February 2002 the Nigerian Federal Executive Council, comprising the president and the federal government ministers, approved the Draft Biosafety Guidelines. They have yet to be submitted to the National Assembly for enactment. We have learned that the guidelines portray biotech products as generally safe for animal and human consumption. The guidelines reportedly also require mandatory labeling of all biotech food products to protect "consumers' right to know".

3. (U) Comment: Nigeria's Director General (DG) of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) recently told the AgAttache that "after attending a biotech conference in Europe, she agrees with a mandatory labeling for biotech food products". NAFDAC has a representative on the National Biosafety Committee. AgAttache countered with a brief explanation of the U.S. position on biotechnology and gave the DG a recent article highlighting its positive attributes. It is not clear to us if she will reconsider her position. (NAFDAC is the GON's regulatory agency for the registration, advertisement, and internal distribution of food imports.)

4. (U) We were also told that the Federal Ministry of Environment may become the regulatory agency for biosafety guidelines, if approved. (Comment: We understand the Ministry is not enthusiastic about biotechnology. We would thus be rather surprised were it to become its regulator; moreover, various parliamentary and executive government committees, as well as private sector entities, have diverging interests in the matter. The GON's intergovernmental and interagency mechanism for handling biotech issues, the National Biosafety Committee, has 18 members, for example. We therefore think NAFDAC will ultimately be empowered to regulate the biotech trade. End comment.)

GREGOIRE